

REMARKS

The applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough examination of the application and request reexamination and reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner rejects claims 22-45, 47, and 50-71 of the subject application under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,683,610 to *Richards et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,016,848 to *Egres Jr.* The Examiner also rejects claims 48-49 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Richards* in view of *Egres Jr.* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,598,598 to *Sorenson*.

Independent claim 22 of the subject application is directed to a foldable member comprising at least a first tube made of layers of material, at least one predetermined hinge area along the length of the first tube, and a plurality of opposing elongated slots in the tube through the layers of material forming separated longitudinal strips of layers of tube material between the slots which fold when subjected to localized buckling forces. Because of the slots, the foldable member can be folded and then released, whereupon it returns to its original configuration. *See* Figs. 1-3 and page 10, lines 1-6 of the subject application. Independent claims 30, 50, 52, 58, and 65-71 also include the feature that the tube is made of layers of material.

The Examiner alleges that *Richards* shows all of the features of the claimed invention, except for the tube being made of layers of material. The Examiner further alleges that *Egres Jr.* shows a tube being made of layers of material, and that it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify *Richards'* structure to arrive at a tube made of layers of material because *Richards* uses a handle which needs to be strong as the handle is subjected to repeated flexing per the motion of the handle, and *Egres Jr.* provides for a strong

handle which is able to withstand repeated flexing.

Richards is directed to an extension for a handle of a tool or similar device. The handle extension of *Richards* is a cylindrical-shaped hollow tube which includes a series of slots 10. Together, the slots and strips of tube material form a clamping area 14. *See* Col. 3, lines 17-26; Col. 3, line 63-Col. 4, line 4 and Figs. 2 and 6 of *Richards*. In operation, the handle of a tool is telescopically inserted into the bore of the handle extension of *Richards*. A clamp 17 is mounted on clamping area 14 generally at its midpoint. Manipulation of wingnut 18 tightens band 16 about the clamping area which will radially compress the strips of material inwardly and clamp the strips uniformly against the handle of the tool. *See* Col. 3, lines 32-41 of *Richards*. It is the compression of the strips radially inward to grip the tool handle that secures the tool handle in a desired position within the handle extension. The handle extension of *Richards* is never meant to fold as shown by the applicant in Figs. 1-3, 8, and 13 of the applicant's disclosure. In summary, *Richards*' slots are designed for clamping; the applicant's slots are designed for folding.

As disclosed by *Richards*, the handle of numerous types of tools is telescopically inserted into the bore of the handle extension and projects several inches or more beyond the location of the clamping area. This prevents a rocking movement of the handle within the tube. *See* Col. 3, lines 52-60 of *Richards*. The extension of the tool handle beyond the clamping area prevents the clamping area from experiencing flexing and prevents the tube material between the slots from folding as claimed by the applicant.

As the handle of *Richards* is designed to prevent the clamping area from experiencing flexing, which also prevents the clamping area from folding, *Richards* fails to disclose a plurality of opposing elongated slots forming separated longitudinal strips of tube material between the slots which fold when subjected to localized buckling forces as claimed by the

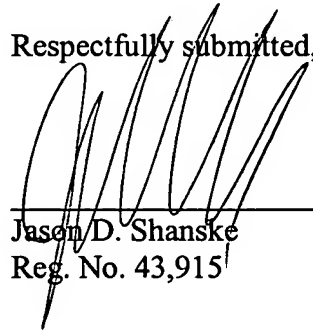
applicant. Instead, *Richards* specifically teaches away from the handle being able to fold as claimed by the applicant.

Egres Jr. also fails to disclose this feature. Therefore, the combination of references fails to render the claims obvious. Accordingly, the claims of the subject application are patentable over the references.

Each of the Examiner's rejections has been addressed or traversed. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is respectfully requested.

If for any reason this Response is found to be incomplete, or if at any time it appears that a telephone conference with counsel would help advance prosecution, please telephone the undersigned or his associates, collect in Waltham, Massachusetts, at (781) 890-5678.

Respectfully submitted,



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